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ABSTRACT

The Fundacion Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho, a large Venezuelan scholarship program that sends students to study in the United States and other countries, is discussed. Information on program objectives, issues, and problems was obtained from work with students at the University of Pittsburgh, the literature, program records, and interviews with foundation officials. The foundation administers a scholarship program to enable students to study abroad in areas of priority for the country, including the development of scientific and technological independence, the preparation of high quality scientists and technicians, and the development of the capacity to prepare technical personnel within Venezuela. Students are chosen to study in areas such as petroleum and petrochemicals, agriculture, the sciences, education, and engineering. Special attention is placed on recruiting scholars from low-income families and from the nonmetropolitan areas of Venezuela. By 1978 the program emphasized higher-level technical education and graduate education rather than undergraduate education. Among the problems that were encountered were: a lack of understanding of the nature of the U.S. liberal arts college; the U.S. system of accreditation and measures of quality; the different types of higher education and degrees; the relationship of the student's thesis with Venezuelan development needs; the quality of the relationship between the Venezuelan sponsoring agency and the student; Venezuelan students' feeling of isolation in the United States; placement in Venezuela after studying abroad; issues relating to educating undergraduates in Venezuela; revalidation of degrees and professional training; and preparation of students for overseas study. (SW)

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Studying Abroad:
The Fundacion Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho

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INTRODUCTION

It is clear that Venezuela has embarked on a great social experiment to convert its enormous mineral riches into an enrichment of human resources. There are few other cases of nations making this ambitious and serious attempt to so invest resources in the future of people, and for this reason the world will look with respect at Venezuela for attempting such a magificent social experiment.

All of this is being done through the Foundation "Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho" which administers the scholarship program and sends students to study throughout the world in areas of priority for national development. The Foundation has as an objective the development of scientific and technological independence, the preparation of high quality scientists and technicians, and the development of the capacity to prepare such persons within Venezuela. In other words, Venezuela through the Foundation is embarked on a great transfer of technology and research from the most advanced universities and research centers to similar institutions in Venezuela through the higher education of Venezuelan students and scientists.

STUDYING ABROAD:

THE FUNDACION GRAN MARISCAL DE AYACUCHO

Venezuela's Government is now sending thousands of persons to universities and technical schools in 30 foreign countries in the largest foreign scholarship program ever seen in Latin America, and it constitutes a major part of the nation's efforts to train professionals and technicians as development projects creat new jobs.

The Ayacucho Scholarships--named in honor of the Venezuelan general, Antonio Jose de Sucre, whose victory at the battle of Ayacucho in 1824 assured Latin America's independence from Spain--was proclaimed on the sesquicentenial of the battle, June 4, 1974.

Like other members of OPEC, which have seen their oil revenues go up since 1973, Venezuela discovered that rapid economic growth created serious shortages in professionals and technologically trained workers that could not be filled by local educational institutions.

Students are chosen by the Ayacucho program for study in high priority areas, such as petroleum and petrochemicals, agriculture, the sciences, education and engineering. Special attention is placed on recruiting scholars from low-income families and from the non-metropolitan areas of Venezuela.

Proclaimed in 1974 by President Carlos Andres Perez, the Foundation had begun to place students in the United States of America (USA) by the end of 1974. It was originally intended to provide about 15,000 scholarships, limited to sectors of national priority, such as agriculture, iron

and steel, fishing, shipping, pertochemical, mining and petroleum. Students were awarded scholarships, with preference for those choosing the priority areas, for study in Venezuela and abroad. Some had the language facility to study in a foreign language but many did not, and therefore, many students began by studying language before they could begin their academic careers. (Fundacion, 1976)

Within a few years the Foundation was supporting about 11,000 students. Through the years one could say, as a rough generality, that about one-third went to the USA, one-third remained in Venezuela, and one-third went abroad to some thirty other countries. The proportions vary from year to year, as do the levels of the students, and the priority areas were expended somewhat to include social sciences, humanities, education, and administration. Table I indicates the 1980 priority list for higher level university study. From this list one can see that by 1980 certain fields were available for study only in Venezuela, only overseas, or were available either way.

This scholarship program is not the first or only one of course. There is a long history of student exchanges between Latin America and Northamerica (Espinosa, 1976). Also, the Venezuelan government supports students under other aupices. CONICIT AND FONINVES, for example, both have scholarship programs, as do the various ministries and government institutes. The Ministry of Education is a major supporter of scholarships for overseas study at the graduate level.

TABLE I

LISTADO DE ESPECIALIDADES PRIORITARIAS PARA 1.980

	VENEZUELA	EXTERIOR
LICENCIATURA		
Ingeniería Mecánica	x	
Medicina	x	
Docencia en Física y Matemática	x	
Docencia en Biología y Química	x	
Docencia en Historia y Geografía	x	
Educación Pre-Escolar	x	
Bibliotecología	x	
Economía Agrícola		
Sociología Rural		
POST-GRADO		
Biología	x	
Física	x	
Matemáticas	x	
Química	x	
Computación	x	x
Ingeniería Mecánica	x	x
Ingeniería Sanitaria	x	x
Ingeniería de Transporte	x	x
Ingeniería Hidraulica	x	x
Viviendas Prefabricadas		x
Metalurgia y Siderurgia	x	x
Geología y Minas	x	x

FROM: Fundacion Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho

	VENEZUELA	EXTERIOR
Riego y Drenaje	x	x
Administración Agropecuaria		x
Medicina		x
Medicina de la Comunidad		x
Anestesiología	x	
Traumatología	x	
Rehabilitación	x	
Radiología	x	
Anatomía Patológica	x	
Administración Servicio de la Salud		x
Educación Pre-Escolar		x
Administración Educativa	x	x
Planificación Curricular		x
Administración Financiera	x	x
Economía Financiera		x
Finanzas Públicas		x
Planificación del Desarrollo	x	x
Trabajo Social Escolar		x
Trabajo Social Penal		x
Administración de Empresas	x	x
Administración Pública	x	x
Administración de Puertos		x
Administración de Aduanas		x
Orientación	x	x
Psicología Social	x	x
Psicología Clínica	x	x
Psicología Escolar	x	x

MM/lmr.-
29-04-80

Venezuela has embarked on a great social experiment to convert its enormous mineral riches into an enrichment of human resources. It is one way of living out the concept, coined years ago by Uslar Pietri--"Sowing the oil." It is an attempt to invest the returns from a depleting resource in the education of young people so the nation will be stronger, more stable, with a mature development of science and technology.

In terms of social change it is necessary to understand just how ambitious and difficult the plan is. For example, the foundation from the beginning reported a heavy—more than half—investment in students from middle and lower social-economic classes. This has been part of an effort to "democratize" higher education, to give outstanding opportunities to bright but parochial students who would otherwise not have such opportunities. For example policy to support a large number of students in foreign countries at universities where language, custom, and system of education is often foreign to the student.

All of this is being done through the Foundation "Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho" which administers the scholarship program and sends students to study throughout the world in areas--science and technology--of priority for national development. The Foundation has as its objectives to free Venezuela from scientific and technological dependence, to prepare high quality scientists and technicians, particularly at the graduate level, and to develop the capacity to prepare such persons within Venezuela. In other words, Venezuela through the Foundation is embarked on a great transfer of technology and research from the most advanced universities and research centers to similar institutions in Venezuela through the higher education of Venezuelan students and scientists. (Fundacion, 1976)

The program began in 1974 under the general administration of CORDIPLAN in the office of the President of Venezuela. In 1975 it was moved to a foundation status to provide more flexibility and antomony. As a private non-profit organization it was more likely also to attract private funds and support from a variety of organizations. It was set up to be governed by a board consisting of the President of the Foundation and four directors from the ministry of Education, Ministry of Mines and Oil, National Council for Science Research, and CORDIPLAN. (Fundacion, 1976)

A Council was set up, also, to determine major policies. On it are a number of cabinet ministers, presidents of national scientific research, and technology organizations, plus a business and labor representative.

As a means of rapidly expanding scientific manpower, Venezuelan policy appears to have been to use the overseas training resources, and it created the Foundation as the quickest and most effective--perhaps only--way of doing that. In effect they rented teaching capacity in colleges and universities in other countries--principally the United States--in order to supplement already overcrowded Venezuelan capacity. This permitted an immediate implementation of the program on a large scale, and avoided a delay of years or decades which would have been necessary to develop sufficient faculty and facilities in Venezuela. In some ways it may be argued that the required resources would never have become available to meet the objective of catching-up to the science and technology of developed countries.

Another agenda item was to enable the country to nationalize basic industries, to train the personnel needed for the process of nationali-

zation.

Operation of the Foundation. Through an application procedure, students request study in one of several specified priority areas, and may request specific institutions and countries in which to do these studies. A selection is made a qualifications, national prioroty needs, socio-economic level of students, and place of origin. Supposedly academic requirements are greater for the upper social classes, but that may not always be apparent. It appears that socio-economic class is determined from data on the application regarding the neighborhood of the home address and the father's occupation, with all the problems one would expect from the application of such criteria.

Selected students receive some orientation, and are placed at a university or language training institution if foreign language acquisition is necessary. Students' expenses are paid for transportation, registration, tuition, books, fees, living expenses, insurance, and relocation costs. Married students may bring families.

The Foundation also services staffs of other ministries and institutes through agreement, such as the Ministry of Agriculture or the Institute for Scientific Research (IVIC), and also universities may use the Foundation to send faculty aborad for higher graduate education and research.

The areas and level of studies vary with the nomenclator, data source, and the year in question. Table II , will give some idea of both. In general it seems that almost half of the students are preparing to be technicians of some sort. Engineering seems to be attracting many students, and agriculture is not. Social sciences are a very strong choice at the graduate level, and to a lesser extent so are

TABLE II

Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation
Total Scholarships Awarded,
Classified by Academic Levels According to Areas of Study

January to November 1980

Academic Levels

Study Area	Summary		Technical		Bachelor's		Post-Graduate	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total	4,264	100.00	1,149	100.00	1,889	100.00	1,226	100.00
Basic Science	200	4.69	10	0.87	122	6.46	68	5.55
Applied Science, Engineering & Technology	1,707	40.03	624	54.31	844	44.68	239	19.49
Applied Science, Agriculture & Marine	211	4.95	47	4.09	127	6.72	37	3.02
Applied Science, Health	337	7.90	48	4.18	155	8.21	134	10.93
Applied Science, Education	533	12.50	108	9.40	181	9.58	244	19.90
Applied Science, Economic & Social	956	22.42	230	20.02	304	16.09	422	34.42
Applied Science, Cultural Development	313	7.34	76	6.61	155	8.21	82	6.69
Others	7	0.17	6	0.52	1	0.05	-	-

Source: Planning Division, Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation.

Academic Levels

Countries	Summary		Technical		Bachelor's		Post-Graduate	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Total	4,246[1]	100.00	1,149	100.00	1,889	100.00	1,226	100.00
Venezuela	1,251	29.34	259	22.54	833	44.10	159	12.97
Other Countries	3,013	70.66	890	77.46	1,056	55.90	1,067	87.03
Germany	16	0.38	6	0.52	9	0.48	1	0.08
Argentina	6	0.14	-	-	3	0.16	3	0.25
Belgium	18	0.42	17	1.48	1	0.05	-	-
Brazil	19	0.45	4	0.35	15	0.79	-	-
Canada	130	3.05	33	2.87	46	2.44	51	4.16
Czechoslovakia	1	0.02	-	-	1	0.05	-	-
Chile	1	0.02	-	-	-	-	1	0.08
Colombia	2	0.05	-	-	2	0.11	-	-
Costa Rica	6	0.14	1	0.09	5	0.26	-	-
Spain	41	0.96	11	0.95	12	0.64	18	1.47
France	221	5.19	13	1.13	40	2.12	168	13.71
Greece	1	0.02	-	-	1	0.05	-	-
Israel	1	0.02	-	-	-	-	1	0.08
Italy	139	3.26	68	5.92	26	1.38	45	3.67
Japan	1	0.02	-	-	-	-	1	0.08
Mexico	126	2.96	37	3.22	70	3.71	19	1.55
Peru	1	0.02	-	-	1	0.05	-	-
Puerto Rico	3	0.07	1	0.09	1	0.05	1	0.08
United Kingdom	205	4.76	48	4.18	32	1.69	123	10.03
Romania	1	0.02	-	-	-	-	1	0.08
Sweden	2	0.05	-	-	-	-	2	0.16
Switzerland	6	0.14	1	0.09	2	0.11	3	0.24
U.S.S.R.	1	0.02	-	-	1	0.05	-	-
U.S.A.	2,067	48.48	650	56.57	788	41.71	629	51.31

Source: Gran Mariscal de Ayacucho Foundation

[1]Does not include 275 scholarships not yet awarded.

FROM: Venezuela Up-To-Date, Spring 1981

Education and Health. Sending students to study in national priority areas, and stick to those choices, has always been a problem. There is a likelihood that graduate students will study overseas, while undergraduate scholarship holders tend to remain in Venezuela or other Spanish-speaking country.

The results so far seem comparatively encouraging, although all the evidence is not yet available. Foundation documents point to a success rate of 80 percent, apparently meaning completion of a program of studies. If true, this rate would be fantastic compared with other students in Venezuela. High rates of attrition at Venezuelan universities are difficult to document but widely accepted as factual (Fundacion, 1976).

By 1978 almost 15,000 scholarships were in effect and the numerical goal had been reached. Of these, 40 percent were for Venezuela study, 35 percent were for study in the USA, and the remainder were scattered among approximately thirty countries. Almost 40 percent of those seeking training at the technical level (less than licenciatura) studied in Venezuela. Forty-six percent of those studying at the level of licenciatura studied in Venezuela, as did 20 percent of those at the graduate level. As for the USA, it had 28 percent of those at the technical level, 34 percent of those at the licenciatura level, and 45 percent of those at the graduate level (Fundacion, 1979).

From the beginning of the program through 1978 the technical trainees had increased dramatically as did the percentage of graduate students.

TABLE III

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED, BY YEAR AND LEVEL

LEVEL	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
Tecnico	344 (24.7)	1047 (13.3)	283 (10.8)	932 (24.6)	831 (27.0)
Licenciatura	993 (71.2)	5776 (73.3)	1461 (55.9)	1959 (51.6)	1381 (44.9)
Post-Grado	57 (4.1)	1053 (13.4)	871 (33.3)	904 (23.8)	863 (28.1)
	1394	7876	2615	3795	3075

By 1978 policies were beginning to change to an emphasis on higher technical education and graduate education. Undergraduate education was seen in a different light--it was to be de-emphasized because the Venezuelan system was already turning out more than enough. Since one could get almost any undergraduate education desired in Venezuela, there would be a de-emphasis of scholarships for overseas also. Table III shows that policy to be continuing. (Fundacion, 1979)

PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

There are things to be learned from experience, and the experiences of the Foundation are often generalizable to other countries and other circumstances. The problems and issues which have been most apparent to the author in working with the Foundation and other agencies are listed and discussed below, sometimes with suggestions for resolving them. The list is not exhustive of the subject.

1. Understanding the nature of the liberal arts college in the USA has been a problem. In Venezuela, as in much of the world, the liberal, broad academic formation of the student takes place in a good secondary school, and one goes to a university to specialize or learn a profession. It is difficult to communicate the lack of similarity between the liberal arts college B.A. and the Licenciatura. This leads to placement problems, course dissatisfaction, and frustration on the part of students.

2. Understanding the system of accreditation of U.S. Institutions of Higher Education has been a problem. There is confusion about this. Overseas agencies sometimes fail to understand that United States institutions of higher education, which number over 3000, are not ranked precisely in order by any official body in the United States. Everyone has an opinion, but such opinion may be more hearsay, individual experience, or reputation than factual.

What the United States does have is a rigorous system of accreditation, which provides assurance that accredited institutions are serious, reputable, professional, and have the resources to teach what they claim to teach. The differences between accredited institutions might be great, but not in terms of factual criteria which have been agreed upon as indices of

quality. The differences are more likely to be ones of size, programs of instruction, prestige, or level of instruction (A.A., B.A., M.A., PhD. etc.). The most important qualitative difference is whether or not the institution is accredited in the speciality for which the student seeks admission. The best course is to stay with institutions which are fully accredited, i.e. not on probation or in process of becoming accredited, or which have failed to be (or have not sought to be) accredited. This is not widely understood by agencies sending students to the USA, although the data are available in Barron's, Peterson's, and other reference books.

3. A lack of understanding of measures of quality in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education has been a problem. The answer to this point lies, in large measure, in the understanding of the accreditation process and the results of this process, mentioned above. In addition, there are studies based on the reputation such institutions enjoy among faculty and administrators, which may be used as guides to the most prestigious institutions (see for example the article in Change, 1977). Prestige may also be judged by the selectivity or competitive nature of the selection process at each institution. This concept is based on the assumption that the most selective institutions (most competitive) are the most prestigious, or somehow the best. This may be true in some sense, but the "best" for some students may be a disaster for other students. In any case, Barrons, Peterson's, Education Directory, and The College Handbook, to mention a few, will provide an index to the selectivity of the institution with respect to admission of students. A careful reading of these sources will provide data, with which one can form judgements about quality.

4. There is a need to understand the different types of higher education

institutions and degrees offered. There is some confusion about the degree structure in the USA, and this may result in unfortunate placements. In general, Junior Colleges, Community Colleges, and Technical Institutions offer two years of liberal or technical education leading to a A.A. degree. Four year colleges and universities offer professional, pre-professional, and liberal education leading to a bachelor degree (B.A., B.S., B.S. in Education, Engineering, Nursing, etc.). Universities generally also offer post-graduate work up to the doctorate but one has to ascertain in what areas the University is strong in post-graduate work. Also, some professional work is entirely post-graduate, as in Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Public Health, and many others.

5. One issue has been the relationship of the student's thesis with Venezuelan development needs. This is a difficult, although valid, issue. Often the student does not make the final decision regarding the thesis. When he does, it is fairly easy to require this as a condition of the student contract. At the doctorate level, what we call the dissertation may be based on research done as a part of a research team of professors and other scholars. Examples might be cell research, cancer research, or research of psychological nature. It would be difficult to see how that research could be made very nationalistic. Much of science is international by its nature, and advances in science, such as the discovery of a vaccine for polio, takes years of research by hundreds of researchers, many of them doctoral students. The results have been of incalculable benefit to human beings all over the world, certainly including Venezuela, and millions of Venezuelan children have been protected from the ravages of this dreadful disease. Nevertheless, in some areas and at some levels it would certainly be possible to orient the thesis more toward the needs

of Venezuela than may be the case today. The solution to the problem lies in part in the attitude of the student, and the expectations he perceives coming from those who administer the scholarship.

6. One problem in a large program of scholarships is the quality of the relationship between the sending agency and the students. This problem leads to a suggestion--that of developing close relationships with a somewhat limited number of high quality Northamerican institutions of higher education. Presently, the student often selects, in fact, the institution, and sometimes changes that selection unilaterally the selection may be based on little data or irrelevant data. The agency cannot relate closely to every student and institution. One could develop a limited group of accredited institutions with which relationships would be maintained on a regular basis. Such institutions would be selected from those which offer programs of priority study in depth. Students who are seeking general, special, or professional training could be guided to make preference from among this group with total assurance that the instruction would be accredited, that the scholarship agency personnel would know the personnel of the institution, that there was English language instruction there or nearby, that there were competent foreign student advisors, and that the institution had some knowledge about Venezuelan education and foreign student needs. Such a system could reduce the problems, abuses, and failures of the past and it might also weed out the poor institutions from consideration and improve the receptivitiy of students and their problems at those institutions which remained a part of the group.

7. Some problems arise because the students feel isolated once they are in the USA. It is good that they be isolated enough to be forced to learn English and make friendships there, but not so isolated that they forget that they are citizens of a great nation which cares about them and their

future. This message cannot be communicated too often. The culture shock with respect to the society and university is great for many students. One might consider presenting every student with a subscription to a periodical about Venezuelan life, a good periodical chosen to maintain communication. A student away from home always longs for news about his country and its place in world affairs. Too many students know too little about their own country, and some begin to lose touch with their own cultural identity.

Students should also receive a questionnaire periodically about their perceptions concerning their studies, the quality of their institution of higher education, the relevance of their course of study, and any suggestions for better selection and placement of students. This would maintain communication and provide valuable data.

8. Another issue related to placement of the returning students. The Foundation, as indicated above, develops contracts with organizations in Venezuela to provide scholarships for employees. A university or ministry of government, for example, may agree to provide and pay for a certain number of persons for training in certain areas over a determined period of time. This provides an excellent opportunity for the university, for example, to improve faculty in areas of need, and to do so with employees who are known to the university as valuable employees. It also permits and organization to offer opportunities to keep its most valued and productive people, while improving their skills and knowledge.

One suggestion relating to placement is to make sure, through the contract, that there is a guarantee of employment in the specialty for which the employee is trained when the employee returns. If the organization is not willing to give this guarantee it is difficult to under-

stand the motive for training employees through the Foundation. After all, the program is designed to keep educated persons in areas where there is a lack of trained persons and where there is a demonstrable national development need.

Another suggestion is to open up these contractural arrangements to the private sector. Apparently this has not been done, although it is legally possible. One can understand the attitude that, given the objectives of the Foundation and its limited resources, the public sector should have first priority. However, if Venezuelan citizens are trained to perform work in scientific and technological areas of highest national priority, who they work for is less important than that they receive the appropriate training and are suitably placed after training. After all, a great deal of applied technology, and some scientific research takes place in the private sector. Also, one must take into account that Venezuelan citizens are free, and they have the right to work for the organization which offers them the best employment. Their talents will help the nation free itself from scientific and technological dependence whether they contribute those talents through the private sector or the public sector.

9. <u>There has been a continual issue of place of education</u>. One suggestion is to place a growing emphasis on educating undergraduates in Venezuela. If the objectives of the Nation are being met, there should be possible a gradual increase in the capacity of higher education in Venezuela. This would also, one expects, increase the capacity of such institutions to do scientific and technological research in a pure as well as applied sense. To do this successfully it may be necessary to improve the attractiveness of study in Venezuela by increasing the value of the scholarships as well as by improving the value and quality of studies

available in Venezuela. Without doubt there are Venezuelan institutions of higher education of the highest quality, but it may be necessary to find better ways to get students to these institutions, to assure access and to improve chances of completion once students are matriculated. In any case, high priority of the Foundation could be a greater investment in Venezuelan higher education in such a way that the seriousness of study, and the quality of research and instruction are improved. If this could be accomplished it would be of enormous long-term benefit for the Nation (Consejo Nacional de Universidades, 1980).

Another suggestion would be to focus overseas scholarships on the graduate level, when students are more mature, more serious, and know better who they are and what their professional objectives are. The undergraduate instruction in Venezuela is widely available and of high quality, at least for those students who are seriously and conscientiously pursuing their studies. It would be possible to select, for overseas study, those who have demonstrated the capacity to study hard--whatever their socio-economic class--and the desire to pursue graduate studies in a priority field. In such a scheme some weight could be given to students of more modest means in order to democratize the selection process in much the same way that it is presently being done. This alternative like the first one, would tend to reduce the number of failures in the United States, thenumber who do not complete their studies, and the number who do not return to serve the Nation.

10. The issue of re-validation of degrees and professional training seems to be sver present. A suggestion would be to develop co-operative programs with a number of good U.S. universities, or consortia of institutions of higher education in the United States. Such consortia already exist for other purposes in some cities. These cooperative arrangements

could benefit both sides, and could take several forms. Degrees could be pursued in, for example, Universidad Central de Venezuela and University of Pittsburgh, with the student spending some time at each university and earning two very similar degrees--one form each of the universities. This cooperation would avoid some of the problems of the returning student who cannot practice a frofession because his degree is not recognized by the appropriate professional association in Venezuela. This cooperation could also provide excellent opportunities for faculty interchange, faculty development programs, and student interchange. Such cooperation might also be used to avoid some of the problems the Foundation has in placing students in U.S. institution.

It would probably be wise to start this cooperative arrangement on a limited basis with three or four universities or consortia, for the purpose of gaining successful experience. Once success is achieved in a few cases, it is easier to transfer that success to other universities. Successful co-operative agreements could involving not only universities, but later perhaps pedagógicos and institutos universitarios de tecnología, as well as other institutions. Such cooperation would go far in realizing the objectives of the Foundation.

11. The problem of accounting for students and their placement in the best situation is a complicated one. This has been difficult in the USA because of the large numbers and foreign language, although clearly there has been an impressive success rate, perhaps higher than in any other country.

The problem arises from a number of factors. First the student is often the person least able to make a placement decision, yet often that is the result. Second, the determination of the quality of the institution and its appropriateness to the needs of the student is not always

clear to Northamericans, much less to foreigners. Third, the students are often too young and immature to quickly or easily acclimate themselves to study difficult subjects in a foreign country, far from home, with a completely different language, culture, and system of studies. Some students are sophisticated enough to handle this, or to quickly learn it, and others are not.

There has been a separate discussion elsewhere in this report about the quality and accreditation of Northamerican universities, so that will not be dealt with here. There are, however, several alternatives which might avoid some of the problems, or make them less important.

Many students go to the USA placed only in an English language institute. The Foundation's US office often cannot help student placement because it does not know the placement desired. The contract which indicates the area of study, often arrives long after the student arrives, so there is no chance to carefully plan a course of academic study in an accredited institution of higher education. In such cases if the students were placed for English language study in a good university, then it is likely the student could continue with academic study at the same university. Another suggestion would be to give priority to students who had gained admission to appropriate universities, or at least to their English language course, before leaving for the United States. The ideal solution, of course, would be to send students whose English was adequate to academic work in USA.

12. Preparation of students for overseas study is a critical factor. Preparation includes academic preparation, motivation, language ability, and psychological preparation. Some students do not have the school or course success to enable them to study what they post on an application.

Some cannot handle the culture shock or separation from home. Some have so little English that a year may be spent before academic work can be successfully pursued. Some are not prepared to do the hard, serious, and time-consuming study often demanded in rigorous programs. They may never have been exposed to such demands before coming to the United States. The problem of being a student in Venezuela are great enough without adding overseas study (Escotet, 1970).

Bureaucratic forms and procedures add to the problems of preparation. Many persons view these as bureaucratic nonsense, but in fact we all have to put up with them. The student visa must be obtained, the TOEFL or similar test taken, admission secured to an appropriate university program, and the proper paper-work for the awarding of the scholarship and payment of sums to individuals and institutions must be completed. It may be that the sponsoring agency could put more time and emphasis on orientation of students before they leave for overseas.

A support system must be developed and explained. Students do get sick, land in jail, run out of money, go through severe psychological stress, get too deeply in debt, and even get thrown out of the university. These are extreme situations but they happen. Often it seems there is no one to turn to--people at the university appear unconcerned and people at home are too far away to be of much help. Under the circumstances, severe depression is not uncommon. These are complex problems with no simple solution, but a thorough orientation could prevent many of them from happening.

SUMMARY

This paper has described a large Venezuelan scholarship program which has sent thousands of graduate students to the USA, many to study in scientific and technological subjects. If is a useful case because the objectives of the programs, the issues involved, and the problems which occur appear to be common, to some extent predictable, and generalizable to other circumstances.

The data for the paper comes from work with students at the University of Pittsburgh, from the literature, and from work with the Foundation. The author interviewed officials in the Foundation, read appropriate reports and Memoria, and researched at random the records of becarios in the United Stated in order to get an idea of the problems most frequently encountered. In addition, a number of becarios and ex-becarios, of the Foundation were interviewed informally.

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